

The 10 RashiYomi Rules

Their presence in Rashis on ShoFeTim

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GOALS

The goal of the Weekly Rashi Digest is to use the weekly Torah portion to expose students at all levels to the ten major methods of Rashi's commentary. Continual weekly exposure to these ten major methods facilitate the acquisition, familiarity, and facility with the major exegetical methods.

The most frequent questions I receive about the Daily Newsletter are the following.

- *What do the classical commentators on Rashi say about his reasons?*
- *If they say such and such what are you adding?*
- *If they don't say what you say, why are you saying it?*

So the next year, or perhaps more, will be devoted to citing Rashi commentators and explaining how the methods of the Newsletter sharpen and crystallize them. We will be citing mostly from the 4-6 classical Rashi commentators: Sifsay Chachamin, Gur Aryeh, Mizrachi, and Chizkuni. We will occasionally add insights of Rav Hirsch and Malbim.

As usual, when making transitions in the Rashi Newsletter we welcome positive and negative comments as well as requests. Please send all comments to RashiYomi@GMail.Com.

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Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Dt19-13a Thur 8/28/14

Background (Dt19-13a): The Bible is discussing a premeditated murderer. The Bible instructs the courts to deliver him to be executed. The bible continues as follows.

Biblical text: *Do not have pity for by eradicating the innocent blood it will be good for you.*

Rashi Text: "Do not have pity" by saying "One person is already dead; what will we gain if we kill the murderer."

Let us see what the Rashi commentators say.

Sifsay Chachamim/Gur Aryeh/Mizrachi: Would anyone think of having pity on a cold-blooded murderer? It is obvious you shouldn't have mercy on a murderer. Therefore Rashi explains "One is dead; what will be accomplished by killing two." In other words Rashi explains *why* we might want to have mercy.

Rashi Newsletter: First we use the **parallelism** method. Compare the following verses discussing eradication (arising from an execution). Notice how our verse, **Dt19-13** stands out as different.

- **Dt13-06** *eradicate the evil from your midst*
- **Dt17-07** *eradicate the evil from your midst*
- **Dt19-19** *eradicate the evil from your midst*
- **Dt22-21** *eradicate the evil from your midst*
- **Dt19-13** *eradicate the innocent blood and it will be good for you*

Next we use the **contradiction** method.

- The murderer killed an *innocent* person
- The murderer is *guilty*

This leads to a contradiction

- The verse does not say *eradicate the guilty blood*
- The verse does not say *atone on the innocent blood*
- The verse says *eradicate the innocent blood.*

Why should the innocent person's blood be eradicated!!

I would propose the following explanation which ties in with what Rashi says. When you kill a person, that person's soul remains to haunt people until his or her blood is avenged. A famous case is **1King22-21:22**. Achav had murdered Navoth to obtain his property. The Bible relates how Navoth haunted the false prophets of Achav, enticed him to go to war, a war in which he was killed.

Had Achav been killed in revenge for killing Navoth, Navoth's soul would not have haunted Achav's prophets and the Jews would have been spared a war. So what the

verses in **Dt19-12:13** say is the following: *Kill the murderer; do not have any pity since by killing the murderer you eradicate the [soul of the] innocent blood and therefore it will be good for you (since the soul of the innocent deceased will not be haunting you)*

Summary: By using the fundamental and universal methods of parallelism and contradiction we have presented a simple explanation of this Rashi. Rashi was not explaining *why* you might have mercy, rather Rashi was explaining why the verse uses the peculiar phrase *eradicate the innocent*. Rashi explains that even if you had grounds to have mercy (e.g. the murderer was a King and hard to try or nothing will be accomplished by killing the murderer since the deceased will remain dead), it would do no good since the blood of the innocent would haunt the nation until the murderer is dead.

Paragraph Structure *Daily Rashi Dt19-06a Fri 8/29/14*

Biblical Text: Dt19-01:06

When you conquer Israel

- Designate 3 cites as refuge for [accidental] murderers
 - Prepare good roads [to these cities] at 3 equidistant border points
 - ❖ (The murderers who may take refuge in these cities
 - Are [accidental] murderers without a prior hatred to the deceased
 - [For example] an ax dismantled while the murderer was cutting and killed
 - ❖ He (a murderer who killed by accident from a dismantled ox) will flee to these refuge cities)
 - Lest the blood relative overtake the murderer on a long road and kill him (and the blood relative cannot be executed because he lacked prior hatred to the murderer)

Rashi Text: The second hollow circle bullet *lest the blood relative* continues the first hollow circle bullet *prepare good roads*. In other words, *prepare good roads for otherwise the blood relative might overtake the murderer and kill him*.

Rashi Newsletter: We regard this Rashi comment as an example of the **formatting** rule which deals with understanding **paragraph structure**. The Rashi Newsletter approaches this paragraph by formatting them with indented bullets as shown.

Notice how our indentations contrastively clarify Rashi. The diamond and arrow bullets are parenthetical; they explain who the murderers who may take refuge are.

If the diamond bullets were circle bullets it would appear that the phrase *lest the blood relative* refers and connects to the *just-previous* diamond bullet *he will flee to these refuge cities*. This connection would not make perfect sense - if the murderer has fled to the refuge cities (where there is a death penalty for being killed by the by the blood relatives, what difference does it matter if someone pursues him).

By using formatting with indentation we clarify the interrelationship of the paragraph parts. The *lest the blood relative pursue...and overtake on a long road* connects with the previous circle bullet *prepare three cities*. Implicit in the Rashi explanation is that the diamond bullets are a parenthetical remark to the paragraph (Rashi does not explain why the paragraph is constructed with a parenthetical remark)

In passing, this is an excellent home-schooling exercise for older children or for adults or even for Rabbinical sermonists. The exercise is as follows *After reading the Rashi, format the biblical sentences Dt19-01:06 using indentation so that the relationship of the verses becomes clear*. In my experience in teaching Rashi, people are good at finding extra words but are not good at Rashis based on global overview.

Sifsay Chachamim/Gur Aryeh/Mizrachi: They do make the point that Rashi connected the 2nd circled bullet with the first circled bullet since connecting the 2nd circled bullet with the previous diamond bullet would not make sense. However they do not format the entire paragraph (They simply state the result) In other words, they do not show the overall structure.

Summary: The Rashi newsletter has introduced **formatting** to further clarify the Rashi and give a holistic overview.

Parallelism *Daily Rashi* Dt19-19a Sat 8/30/2014

Background: The Bible is describing the punishment for false witnesses who testified falsely against an innocent person.

Biblical Text: (Dt19-19a)

		Do	To them (the false witnesses)
As they	plotted	To do	To their brother (the person the false witnesses testified against)

Rashi: Parallelism requires *do to them as they did to their brother*. It doesn't say that. Rather it says *do to them as they plotted to do to their brother*. The word *plotted* does not fit into the parallelism. The emphasis implied by the non-parallel word *plotted* basically says that false witnesses are only punished for plots not for accomplishments. For example, if two witnesses testified against a person that (s)he committed a murder (with the intent of having him/her executed) then they (the witnesses) are executed; but if the person they testified against was executed then the false witnesses are not punished! We infer this from the phrase *plotted to do* which is not parallel with *do*. False witnesses are punished on what they plotted not on what they do!

Rashi Newsletter approach: The Rashi Newsletter emphasizes **parallelism**. This is superior to one traditional approach which emphasizes omni-significance. Omni-significance emphasizes that every word is significant and hence the *extra* word *plotted* in the phrase *plotted to do* drives the Rashi comment.

The Rashi newsletter argues that omni-significance *by itself* does not justify a Rashi comment. However, omni-significance *in conjunction with* some other rule such as parallelism does justify comment since the parallelism drives the Rashi comment. What is peculiar in the verse is *do to - plotted to do* instead of the expected *do - did*. None of the Rashi commentators mention the **parallelism** - they simply employ the extra word approach.

However, all the commentators explore the philosophical implications of this law. Why? Why if the witnesses only plotted to kill, they are executed, but if they really obtained an execution they are not killed. Here are some approaches

Sifsay Chachamim: Citing the Maharash: The death penalty is an atonement for a sinner. The false witnesses caused a court to incorrectly execute someone and hence don't deserve atonement because of all the people he caused to sin. Hence we don't execute.

Gur Aryeh /Mizrachi: Citing the Ramban: If the plot worked and the person testified against was executed they (s)he must have deserved it on the grounds that

you can't kill someone unless they deserved it. Consequently, they didn't do anything wrong and therefore they are not executed.

Mizrachi comment on the Ramban:

Who asked him to give such far fetched rationalizations? We definitely need a good solid reason.

Gur Aryeh continues with his own analogy:

If you plot to ram your car into someone else's car and fail you should be punished for the plot. But if you plot to ram your car into someone else's car and succeed then your car is smashed and you don't have to be punished further.

Gur Aryeh further explains that the false witnesses are punished because their hatred leads them to testify falsely and they must be terminated; but if they accomplished their goal they are no longer in a state of hatred, are no longer a threat and need not be punished.

As Mizrachi says, we definitely need a good solid explanation. Again as Mizrachi says, none of the above explanations seem satisfying.

Notice how Rashi avoided the philosophical issue. My teacher of Rashi, Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchick, the Rav, said (while teaching Rashi): *When explaining a Rashi it is best to stay in the placid waters of grammar and avoid the stormy waters of philosophy.*

Diagram / Meaning *Daily Rashi Dt19-03b Sun 8/31/2014*

Background: The Bible is describing the requirement to create 3 refuge cities.

Biblical Text: (Dt19-03b) Prepare roads, *thrice the border*, designate 3 cities [for refuge]

----- City 1 ----- City 2 ----- City 3-----

Rashi: *Thrice the border means that the 3 cities should be equidistant from each other and from the borders [as shown in the diagram].*

Gur Aryeh/ Mizrachi: The best way to describe the diagram is *quadriize the cities*

since the 3 cities create 4 parts. So the verb should be *quadrize* not *thrice*. But Rashi's point is that the 3 cities should create equidistant parts.

Sifsay Chachamim: The Gur Aryeh and Mizrachi approaches do not really solve the problem. Rashi should be interpreted as explaining that *thrice* does not mean create three *parts* but rather *thrice* means create three *cuts*. That is, *cut the border at 3 equidistant points and designate cities*.

Rashi Newsletter approach: The Rashi Newsletter clarifies the Sifsay Chachamim by categorizing and classifying the sifsay chachamim comment as using the Rashi **meaning** rule. In fact, it is a universal phenomena in all languages to transform adjectives and nouns into verbs. Examples are

- the adjective *three* becomes the verb *thrice*
- the adjective *red* becomes the verb *redde*
- the adjective *long* becomes the verb *elongate*

So Rashi is explaining what the new verb *thrice* means in relation to *three*. It does not mean *create 3 parts* but means *make 3 cuts*.

APPENDIX

THE 10 RASHI RULE CATEGORIES / THE 30 RASHI RULES

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I-REFERENCE: Dt26-05d *We went down to Egypt with a few people* explained by Gn46-27: with 70 people

II-MEANING / Lexicography / Dictionary: EXAMPLE (Connectives) KI means

IF,PERHAPS,RATHER,BECAUSE,WHEN,THAT (Rashi on Gn18-15a Gn24-33a) **EXAMPLE (Nuances):**

YDA means FAMILIAR, not KNOW (eg Dt34-10a) eg Gn04-01 Adam was FAMILIAR with his wife **EXAMPLE**

(Idioms) ON THE FACE OF means DURING THE LIFETIME (Rashi on Nu03-04a Gn11-28a Ex20-03c Dt05-07a) **EXAMPLE (Synonyms)** *Marchesheth* means pot; *Machavath* means frying pan (Lv02-05a, 07a)

EXAMPLE (Hononyms) SHAMAH can mean listen, hear, understand: (Gn42-23a) *They didn't appreciate that Joseph understood them* (Note: They knew he was listening) **EXAMPLE (Metonymy)** (Lv02-11a) *Don't offer ...any honey as sacrifices* RASHI: *honey* includes any *sweet fruit juice*

III-GRAMMAR: EXAMPLE: BA-ah means CAME;ba-AH means COMING(Gn46-26a)

EXAMPLE: Hitpael conjugation has different rules if 1st root letter is Tzade (Gn44-16a)

IV-PARALLELISM: (Ex20-04) Dont **POSSESS** the gods of others Dont **MAKE** idols RASHI: So both **POSSESSion** & **MAKING** of idols are prohibited

V-CONTRADICTION: (Nu04-03, Nu08-24a) Levites start Temple work at 25; Levites start temple work at 30. RASHI: They apprentice at 25 but start actual service at 30.

VI-STYLE: RABBI ISHMAEL RULES: EXAMPLE: (Simple verses should be generalized): (Rashi Pesachim 6) (Dt25-04a) Dont **MUZZLE** an **OX** while **THRESHING** RASHI: Dont **STOP** any **WORKING ANIMAL** from eating

VII-FORMATTING: EXAMPLE (BOLD indicated by Repetition): Ex12-09c) **COOK COOK** it in water (So **COOKED-COOKED** is understood the same way bold is understood by modern reader) RASHI: Preferred to **COOK** it in water; But **COOK** it at all costs (Even if you dont have water) **EXAMPLE: (BULLETS indicated by Repeating keywords)** (Ex03-11a) Who am I - **THAT** I should go to Pharaoh - **THAT** I should take the Jews out of Egypt RASHI: Repeated word **THAT** creates **BULLET** effect - Pharaoh was a difficult king (Bullet one) - Jews were not yet ready for freedom (Bullet two) **EXAMPLE (Climax assumed in any Biblical list):** (Dt19-11a) If a man **HATES, SPIES, CONFRONTS & KILLS**. RASHI: Bible identifies 4 stages to murder (indicated by capped words)

VIII-DATABASE: EXAMPLE: *God spoke to Moses to say over* introduces about 7 dozen biblical commandments; *God spoke to Aaron to say over* only introduces 2 commandments. RASHI: (Lv10-03b) Aaron was silent when his sons died because they served in the Temple drunk; hence he merited that the commandment prohibiting priests to work in the Temple drunk, was given to him

IX-NON VERSE: EXAMPLE: (Use of Algebra)(Ex38-26b) *Temple donations of silver were 100 Kikar and 1775 Shekel from 630,550 half-shekels* RASHI: So one Kikar of silver = 3000 Shekel.

X: SYMBOLISM: EXAMPLE: (Use of puns) (NuXX-XX) Moses made a copper snake for people to look up to when bitten by snakes (so they should pray and recover) RASHI: (Nu21-09a) The Hebrew root for copper and snake are identical (Cf. The English *copperhead*) Moses made the metal snake copper colored to symbolize the snake